DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 199 328 UD 021 246

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TITLE Development of Black Community Influence in a Southern School District.
SPONS AGENCY National Inst. of Education (ED), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE [80]
GRANT NIE-G-79-0043
NOTE 42p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Blacks; *Community Influence; Community Involvement; Community Role; De Facto Segregation; Desegregation Methods; Elementary Secondary Education; History; *School Administration; School Community Relationship; *School Desegregation; School Districts
IDENTIFIERS *North Carolina (Bradford)

ABSTRACT

This paper traces the development of input from the black community of Bradford, North Carolina, in the decision-making, administration, and resource allocation of the local school district. The approaches taken by blacks and by the traditional interests in the district to express their respective ideas during this development are analyzed and their effects on the school district and on school-community relations are examined. Placing an emphasis on the desegregation of Bradford's schools, the paper is organized roughly into two main sections. After some introductory remarks, the course of events since World War II in the development of black input to the schools is outlined. A description of the dual structure once operating in the district is also presented. Secondly, the events and processes in the development of black input are focused upon in order to describe the importance of the school district in community relations, the peculiar features of the political and organizational situation defining the context for conflict, and the strategies that operated in the process of change and resistance. (Author/MK)

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK COMMUNITY INFLUENCE IN A SOUTHERN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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A Report of Research Sponsored by the National Institution of Education

Grant Number NIE-G-79-0043

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UD021246

INTRODUCTION

This paper[1] traces the development of input from the black community of a small southern city into the decision-making, administration and resource allocation of the local school district. The approaches taken by blacks and by the traditional interests in the district to express their respective interests during this development are analyzed, and their effects on the school district and on relations between the community and the schools are examined. For the black population as a 'group' in a plural situation (see Smith 1974), gaining more voice in school affairs has required significant changes in the social order of the district. The traditionally subordinate place of blacks in the schools has been a part of social relations in the larger community and of the political and symbolic relations between the community and the educational system. The school system has been an important site in the social structure of the community, expressing and embodying a frame for social organization in terms of black and white distinctions and oppositions. The district's value is therefore highly symbolic and political as well as academic, economic, or for vocational considerations.

Because of these values of the schools in the community, the district has been an arena for conflict between blacks and whites over the basic organization of social relations. The resources applied by blacks in pursuit of change have had some costs for that group and for the schools. However, the character of the school system and the political situation forming the context for district action allowed traditional interests to pursue forms of resistance which accentuated the costs of change and reorganization. The results of the processes of change and resistance have affected the status and character of the school district. Many of the problems in the district and in the relations between the community and the schools which have been encountered in past years stem not directly from the process of desegregation and district reorganization, but from the ways in which change had to be implemented in the face of resistance.

The following discussion of these topics is organized roughly into two main sections. After some further introductory remarks, the course of events since World War II in the development of black input to the schools is outlined. A description of the basic character of the dual structure once operating in the district is also presented. Secondly, the events and processes in the development are focused upon in order to describe the importance of the school district in community relations, the peculiar features of the political and organizational situation defining the context for conflict, and the 'strategies' which can be seen to have operated in the process of change and resistence.[2]

Conceptual Approaches

Perspectives developed from social anthropology are applied in this analysis to accommodate distinctive cultural and symbolic features which appear important in the organization of relations between the black community and the larger, white dominated city. Such features seem to be especially significant in educational affairs. This approach is akin to, but yet distinct from much of the previous literature on school-community relations.

In many studies of community decisions and power, events and processes in school system affairs have been examined to illustrate the nature of the distribution of power or to identify who governs in the community as a whole (see reviews by Polsby 1963; Hawley and Wirt 1968; Lutz and Iannaccone 1969, 1970 for examples). The present investigation of the development of greater voice by blacks in Bradford (a psuedonym) is focused upon the school district as a delimited sector of community life. Our concern includes the position of educational affairs in the general community. At the same time, the area of school and educational affairs constitutes a sector with its own dynamic, generated by the character of the school system and by the interests of participants particular to those affairs. This latter aspect of education issues has been partially indicated by the "pluralist" students of community power (e.g., see Dahl 1961; Polsby 1963) as contrasted with those scholars who suggest the existence of "power elites" whose interests are expressed in every area of community life, including the schools (e.g., see Hunter 1953; Vidich and Bensman 1958).

As a sector of community life, then, the school district can be viewed as both an arena and a system. In addition, both local district and local community relations have became part of larger arenas and negotiations, connected by penetrations of power from state and federal governments, integrated into regional or national economies and affected by events and attitudes in American society as a whole (see Long 1972). At the same time, the district may be seen as having a position in an environment or "ecology of social games" which constitute the community and other arenas (Long 1958). This conception places more attention on the goals of actors and the processes involved in district affairs themselves. In either view (as arena or "game"), the results of activities in the school district have impacts on other sectors and throughout the context of the community. In light of the considerations made above, therefore, the activities and affairs of the school district were assumed to be related to the organization and processes of Bradford as a whole, yet the character of the district's position in the community structure was not assumed.

The data on Bradford schools reveal both problems in applying the conceptual models mentioned above and aspects of the situation for which each model has some appropriateness. The restricted focus of the research (to educational affairs) limits the applicability of a

power structure analysis, as does the way participants have often reduced issues to conflicts over white and black interests. A pluralist analysis does not adequately allow for seeing the expression of traditional interests in conflict with other groups within the district, nor does it reflect the framing of various concerns into opposing interests in social race relations. Long's "unwalled city" model (see above) is modified by the inside/outside distinctions found in Bradford which have been important in the outcome of conflict about the schools. At the same time, entrenched interests, issue-focused activities, network contacts and informal influence, the degrees of connection between certain sectors of the community, and the imposition of authority and directives from outside the community are all factors which have been significant in the changes which have developed in the Bradford city school system.

An important set of factors not explicitly accommodated by the models of community structure mentioned above involves the operation of community actors within a culturally interpreted pattern of social organization which exhibits distinct divisions of dominant and subordinate populations, often articulated in symbolic classifications with associated rights. Such conditions are more readily identified when conceptualized as "plural" societies (Smith 1974) using Smith's perspective rather than that associated with political power studies such as that of Dahl. In this approach, 'groups' may be distinguished yet not possess full corporate status, thus lacking autonomy over their own social relations while not being identified as full members of the larger community. Ethnic, racial and similar stereotypes or cultural schema may be part of the social order defining such distinctions and contributing to the subordinate status of certain populations.

This perspective derives from social anthropology and as such attempts to consider the interactions of culture and social behavior to constitute the patterned relations and social environment of community participants. The addition of the symbolic dimension suggests that particular sectors of community life, such as school affairs, may articulate symbolically with other sectors and arenas and thus may take on power or special significance in the community because of its symbolic position as well as from its governmental or administrative character. In addition, the structure of social relations may be such that symbolic factors operate to define and restrict access to or ability to utilize power and authority in a given sector of the community life. Subordinate groups so excluded are at a significant disadvantage in political negotiation so long as the symbolic system continues to apply.

Finally, cultural or symbolic features may exist in a community's organization so that the particular characteristics of a given arena of interest take on added importance in interactions concerning the distribution of decision-making or other power. For example, the institutional and organizational character of the school district has been a critical factor in the ordering of social relations in the district, affecting the pattern of relations between blacks and whites

in the city as a whole. This example and other data illustrating the articulation of symbol and structure in the plural context in Bradford are presented in the following sections below.

Setting

Bradford is a small city located in North Carolina. Its current population is approximately 100,000 (see figure 1). The development of the town followed the growth of tobacco and textile industry in the area in the 19th century and these industries remain important in Bradford's economy. In recent decades, professional and technical workers have been attracted to the area by the development of "soft" industry (e.g., research and development) and the growth of universities and colleges. After its initial establishment as an industrial center, Bradford also became a center for banking and other enterprises that require 'white-collar' and management employees. As a result, the city's population shows great disparities of wealth and education. In the period discussed in this paper, the majority of the black population was low-income or working class.

In its early history, power and influence in Bradford was centralized in the hands of the entrepreneurs and capitalists responsible for the development of industry. After the turn of the century, these original "city-fathers" gradually moved away, leading to substantial absentee ownership of the basic industry in city. The role of the city elite was taken over by the owners and operators of the secondary industries such as banking and insurance and by the managerial group that developed to operate the remaining industries.

The black population in Bradford grew as a result of labor migration from the surrounding areas. In addition, there seems to have been a significant inflow of blacks from the North, many of whom came to the area as entrepreneurs, teachers and in similar roles. There soon developed an active black business community. Black entrepreneurial activity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century laid the foundations for the development of insurance and banking interests which now have regional and national as well as local focus. In turn, these business enterprises came to be the central economic foundation for the growth of a middle class and an elite leadership group in the black population. This business base developed to a great degree independently of local white economy. However, a traditionally Southern pattern of segregation and discrimination has been maintained toward the black population in Bradford. As in a number of other North Carolina communities, this pattern is ignored by Bradford citizens, who claim that social race relations in the city have always been cordial and "progressive" (see Chafe 1980).

The city of Bradford is governed by a council-manager system. The majority of council members are nominated by wards, the rest at large, with the mayor sitting on the council. Elections are at

TABLE 1: BRADFORD POPULATION, CITY AND COUNTY: 1950-1976

	1976 (est.)	1970	1960	1950
County	149,000*	132,000	112,000	101,500
White	—	89,000	76,000	64,500**
Black	—	43,000	36,000	32,500**
% Black	—	32.6	32.1	32.0
City	105,000	95,500	78,500	71,500
White	—	58,000	50,000	45,000
Black	—	37,000	28,000	26,000
% Black	—	38.8	35.9	36.6

*All figures rounded to nearest 500.

**Excludes college non-residents

large. The city government is constrained by the jurisdiction of the Board of County Commissioners in some matters. In North Carolina, county commissioners occupy a central political role because the commission is responsible for fiscal matters in the county including the tax rate structure, disbursement of county taxes, and the presentation of bonds and similar issues to voters. The city school district relies on the County Commissioners for a supplement to its budget from state and federal funds. In recent years, the district has received approximately 55% of its budget from state funds, primarily for teachers' salaries, and about 30% locally.

Bradford City Schools is a more or less autonomous unit in the city governmental structure. The superintendent heads the district administration and is responsible to the Board of Education, which is the policy making body for the system. Until 1975, that board had 6 members who were appointed by the city council. In 1975, the school board became a 5 member board with members elected by voters every four years in the city school district. Change to an elected board removed the district from any formal connection with city government.

The school district has tended to be marginal in the city elite's practical consideration of government and economic development in Bradford. In addition to the district's formal administrative autonomy, it's political position is peripheral in terms of the material resources managed by the district, the perceived effect of school affairs on the development of the community, and similar factors. However, the values of formal education in American culture have led informants to believe that the quality of the local educational program is indirectly significant in maintaining the community's image and thus its potential for growth and development. In the long term, the organization of educational institutions may be an important factor in the determination of macro-social configurations of occupational structures, patterns of discrimination and similar features in American society.

Nonetheless, the district has been important in the arena of community affairs, not so much because of its material significance, but because of its symbolic importance in the structure of relations in the community and the cultural values ascribed to formal education. In Bradford, membership of the Board of Education has traditionally been drawn from the dominant white business and political leadership of the city. The traditional organization of the school district has expressed the characteristic segregation and duality between blacks and whites in the city. The importance of the school system in the social order will be further discussed below.

SECTION I: The Black Community and the School District

Until court-ordered changes in the 1960's, the Bradford City Schools operated a dual system of schools for blacks and whites under the laws of the state of North Carolina. No members of the Board of Education and officials in the district administration were black. School board members tended to be conservative politically, and as time went on, "community conservative" or community progress oriented (Agger, Goldrich and Swanson 1964). Until the Brown decisions by the Supreme Court, the Bradford schools were of little special concern to the white leadership of the city. During the period before 1954, the schools were generally acceptable to the white community and were considered to be of high quality. General community interest in the problems of the black schools was expressed through the philantropy of some white patrons or in individual conversations between black leaders and their white contacts who held positions in business or government.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE DUAL SYSTEM

The dual system was clearly delineated with separately organized schools for black and white children. The two sets of schools used different materials, different facilities and even followed different grade organizations and curricula. (For many years, black students had no junior high school, although there was such a school for whites. As one black informant puts it: "We knew it [a 6-3-3 school organization of grades] had to be better, or they wouldn't have had it.") Even at this early period, the district practiced some busing of students in order to transport black students to distant schools. Separate attendance maps existed for black and white students. Until the 1960's, black and white principals met separately. Similarly, there existed separate PTA's and other community contact organizations. There were few possibilities for informal contacts between black and white personnel and apparently little inclination for such from district officials. The problems of such encounters in a segregated society were great. A former black educator relates the story of a district official who met him on the street, while simultaneously encountering a white female acquaintance. The official became distraught in his attempts to raise his hat to the woman, while doing so in a manner which avoided acknowledgement to the black faculty member.

The superintendent had direct responsibility for the administration of the black schools. In the early period of public education in the city, the principal of the black high school had apparently operated as an informal spokesman for the black schools to the superintendent. The principal held a respected position as business and community leader in the black population as well as his role as educator. This individual's influence extended only weakly to black schools in the system other than his own. Although by 1950 such a central figure was no longer present, individual black schools in

the district continued to have a degree of autonomy over some affairs within their own schools. The administration seemed, in many cases, uninterested in the particulars of education for black children. Ultimately, however, all decisions and actions made by black school officials and faculty were dependent on the review and acceptance of the superintendent or some other position in the district administration held by a white person. Until the late 1960's, there were no black personnel in the central administration of the district. Input from black personnel within the system was formally restricted to the superintendent or a limited number of other administrators. Successful requests from blacks for resources depended to some extent on developing a good relationship and process of communication with these administrators during the restricted periods of contact with them. Black educators were therefore sensitive to the occasional presence of "sympathetic" whites in the administration, or that of a "reasonable" superintendent. The situation in the school district thus exhibited the same patterns of informal communication and "friend" or "patron" relationships as did the larger dual system in the city.

In addition to the narrow channeling of communication from black personnel in the district, black educators' access to information concerning the conditions and operations in the white schools was also restricted. It was thus extremely difficult for black staff to accurately ascertain the degree of differences between the schools, since they rarely were able to see the white facilities. Black administrators had few opportunities to make direct comparisons and there were no black personnel at levels high enough in district organization to have access to general data. The top white administrators could thus assure the black faculty that their situation was not unusual with respect to supplies, facilities and other educational needs. Although these faculty believed there were differences, they had little idea how disparate the conditions actually were. In addition, the structural position of black personnel in the school system tended to discourage them from intensive or extended efforts to learn such information. Black personnel were extremely cautious throughout the period during which the dual system operated because of fears of loss of position as well as of retribution which might affect the black schools in general.

Organization for Change

The development of black input into the school district tended to be the result of actions taken by community leaders in the black population rather than by black educators in the schools. Black leaders in the city have consistently articulated a belief in the potential of education and training for social advancement and an improved quality of life. The local black college, the high school and the neighborhood schools all played significant roles in black community life and have been highly valued.

Although these black leaders placed a high value on education and the role of the schools in the community, the expression of their interests in education came as a part of their organization for political activity on a variety of topics of concern to the black population. In the 1930's, various black activists and leading figures from the black business community and from the black college formed an organization to function as a coordinating group for the pursuit of improvements in all areas of concern to the black population. This organization, known as the Committee for the Negro Community (CNC), sought to include all elements of the black population and to reach consensus on all decisions. Standing sub-committees were established to address specific issues, including political activity and education, among others. The basis of the group's political strength was its efforts to organize the voting power of the black population. By the late 1940's, the CNC had successfully enacted programs of voter registration and precinct organization and was beginning to be a significant force in local party negotiations and city elections.

In school affairs, the CNC operated through its Education Committee to receive the concerns and complaints of black parents and students and to communicate with the superintendent of schools and the Board of Education as well as with particular schools. In 1948, the CNC initiated a suit against the Bradford City Schools. This action was designed to improve facilities and educational materials in the black schools. The suit was brought within the framework of the dual system and did not attempt to argue for desegregation or for reorganization of the district. Rather, it called for specific expenditures to correct inequalities between the black and white schools, based on the separate but equal principle enunciated in North Carolina law. Black school personnel had no overt role in the preparation and conduct of the suit, although some were utilized as witnesses and/or attended hearings. Through extensive documentation and preparation on the part of CNC workers the plaintiffs were able to demonstrate that great discrepancies in physical facilities and materials did exist between the black and white schools. State courts ruled in 1950 that the pursuit of exactly equal conditions between the schools was legitimate and ordered the city schools to correct the situation. The district did not appeal the case and for several years large portions of the city schools' budget went to improving physical conditions in the black schools.

THE ACHIEVEMENT OF TOKEN DESEGREGATION

The response of the state of North Carolina to the Supreme Court decisions of 1954 ultimately functioned to slow the process of change in the schools. A series of provisions, collectively known as the Pearsall Plan, were adopted by the legislature. These acts essentially left the responsibility for desegregation at the local level as the state removed itself from direct regulation of attendance policies for the public school districts.

The Bradford district thus had a degree of autonomy in dealing with desegregation and the accommodation of black interests. Although the impetus for this process of desegregation and change in the schools

stemmed from the federal judiciary, both black and white leaders in the district had some control over the entry of the courts into the school system through decisions regarding their own policies and recourse to legal action. At the same time, black interests would have to mobilize local efforts in order to affect the district, although judicial authority was available as a resource in their local negotiations.

Black Political Position and Desegregation

During the 1950's, the CNC continued to push its program of political activity. Their voting effectiveness in supporting issues and candidates reached a high level in this period. By the mid-decade, the Committee has succeeded in placing a black man on the city council representing a predominately black ward, a position held by a black since then. It had also successfully backed sympathetic or compromise candidates for various city offices. Because of its local voting strength, CNC representatives were now able to exert some degree of informal influence on the council and other political interests in the local arena. Expressions of interest to individuals who were politically active or in government might be passed on to the school district. Direct petition and communication to the school board and the superintendent also continued. In 1958, in the midst of conflict with the district over issues of desegregation, CNC interests succeeded in influencing the city council to appoint a black member to the Board of Education.

Efforts to Affect the Schools

With the Supreme Court decisions in 1954 and 1955, black leaders in Bradford generally adopted desegregation as a goal and a program in their activities concerning educational affairs. Initially, the members of the CNC seem to have taken a wait-and see stance. However, in 1955 and 56, black leaders organized and presented to the school system petitions which called for the district to comply with constitutional requirements and to create a unified educational system for whites and blacks. The strategy of avoidance and resistance being adopted by the state and the Bradford city schools soon became clear, however. In 1955, the Board of Education for the Bradford City Schools had appointed a committee to investigate the implications of the Brown rulings for the district organization. This committee reported, over the next two years, that it was "experiencing difficulty in formulating a recommendation which will meet with sufficient public support to insure continued operation of our local public schools."

The CNC played a major role in the organization of administrative and later legal efforts to plan and pursue the educational goals of the black community. Although suits were brought formally by the NAACP, the CNC was closely involved and supportive of these efforts. CNC members played significant planning and leadership roles and the committee structure was exploited to organize and coordinate the activities of parents and other participants. In addition to pursuing the larger

program of change at the district level, the Education Committee of the CNC continued to respond to the complaints of parents and children at particular schools.

Under the new state legislation, local districts had full responsibility for assigning students to schools on "grounds other than race." The CNC, in conjunction with the local NAACP, organized a committee to support several families' petitions to have their children transferred to white schools in 1957. These applications were denied by the Board of Education:

> It is our considered opinion that conditions and circumstances are such that any departure from former policies would result in injustice to the children of both races.... It is also our considered opinion that such a refusal will not develop harmful psychological effects to the children... but to grant such requests [for transfer]... would be harmful psychologically to a great many children of both races.

After this denial, lawsuits were entered by several applicants against the school system.

Also in 1957, a number of liberal and concerned whites encouraged the city government to form a Human Relations Commission. CNC members were cautiously supportive of this move. In order to provide for negotiation before further litigation against the district, members of the Commission and a number of black leaders arranged a meeting between representatives of the black interests and the Board of Education in the spring of 1958. Just days before this meeting, the city council appointed the first black representative to the school board. At the meeting with the school board, a spokesman for the black group made some preliminary remarks and then indicated the group's willingness and desire to speak informally and closely with the board on the desegregation issue. These remarks were reportedly met by complete silence. When pressed for an intepretation of this "response," the chairman of the board indicated that it should be taken as "silence."[3] The board then swore in its new black member.

The issue of desegregation became a vehicle for the pursuit of other black goals in the school system. Conversely, problems with the educational program in the black schools could be framed as desegregation issues. Thus, for example, when overcrowding at a black elementary school led the district to plan double sessions for the school, the CNC protested, suggesting that the problem would be removed if a unified school system was formed. The district added more buses to take children at the crowded school across town to another black school. In 1959, the administration tried another approach to dealing with the overcrowded conditions in the black schools. The district made plans to reopen a school that had been closed because of its age and deteriorated condition, in order to handle the excess black students. Black personnel at the overcrowded schools notified their PTA and the black PTA Council. The PTA, CNC and NAACP approached the district with the results of an

inspection of the school and a refusal to use the facilities. Although the Board of Education attempted to circumvent this stand by meeting with other black representatives that it selected, the black community presented a united front and argued that desegregation provided the only solution to the problems. Significantly, for the first time since a black had been added, the local newspapers carried full accounts of a school board meeting. At that session, blacks forced a discussion of the desegregation issue as relevant to the overcrowding in the black schools. Eventually, the district changed its plans and suggested additions to black facilities.

In the fall of 1959, the courts ruled against the claim of the black plaintiffs that the Bradford schools had discriminated against them, finding that parents and their children had not exhausted all administrative possibilities in their petitions for transfers. At the same time, the court rebuked the school board for bad faith in its procedures concerning applications for transfers. Foreseeing the results of the suits, CNC leaders had initiated a change in strategy. In a massive process of coordination and support, several hundred parents in the black community were organized to file applications for transfers for the 1959-60 school year. At the same time, black leaders in informal conversations with white contacts in the community indicated that the school issue was too closely tied to their interests to be able to continue to support programs and efforts for community improvement unless some changes were forthcoming.[4] The district reassigned a small number of black students (less than 10) for that school year and the next. They rejected hundreds of others, directing those applicants to a long process of appeals and further review by the board, in order to exhaust "all administrative remedies."

SLOW PROGRESS IN THE SIXTIES

The token desegregation achieved in 1959 continued for the next several years as the school district continued to avoid the issue of reorganization. In these years, the ability of traditional interests in the district to block or stall black efforts was apparent, and the policy of resistance to change was unmistakeable. This resistance determined much of the course of events in the development of black input in this period. During the decade, however, new strategies were adopted by various segments of the black population which had some effects in the district. Thus, the start of the decade saw only token desegregation, no blacks in higher administrative posts, and a district policy which supported a dual system and showed no local initiative for reorganization of the schools. By the end of the decade, however, the schools were implementing a court ordered desegregation plan for students and faculty, blacks held a few positions in the district office, and system officials and board members were acknowledging the necessity to comply peacefully with the law.

During the 1960's urban sprawl and suburbanization in Bradford increased. As the population shifted to the edges of the city and into the county, the city limits were expanded by annexations of the

surrounding areas. This process increased the "city-out" areas of the school district. In North Carolina law, the city can annex without a vote by the affected population. Addition to the city school district, however, requires a vote of compliance by the community to be annexed. Very few areas voted to join the city schools; informants believe these decisions to have been often influenced by the pressures for desegregation and the growing numbers of black students in the city schools. The sections within the city limits but in the county school district are known as "city-out" areas. During this time, urban renewal was undertaken in the city, which has resulted in the clearing of substantial portions of traditionally black neighborhoods. One outcome has been to concentrate low income blacks in housing projects which are generally located in or near traditionally black sections of the city. (Subsidized housing continues to be built in the city.)

Although Bradford continued to be politically dominated by white leaders representing conservative and moderate business and community development interests, the political position of the CNC and black interests improved during the decade. By 1970, there was greater black representation on the city council and a black person on the Board of County Commissioners. The position on the school board had been maintained, and another black member appointed. At the same time, blacks had attained positions on a number of civic boards and commissions. During the period, black voting strength continued to be important in city council ward elections and on bond issues. The sixties also saw the development of a mass protest movement in the black population and the growth of consciousness of black identity in the community.

Desegregation

Black leadership in Bradford continued its legal battle with the Board of Education over the issue of desegregation. A series of judicial decisions were handed down from 1961 through 1965. In a 1961 decision, the court again criticized the school board for its lack of good faith compliance with the law and condemned the use of dual attendance maps. In 1962, although dual maps had been abandoned, the judge was still able to criticize the board's assignment practices as essentially unchanged. Although the court did not, in this decision, require further desegregation of the schools, appeals led to a reversal of that ruling. The assignment of students in the district was declared discrimatory and unconstitutional. Several desegregation plans submitted by the Bradford schools were subsequently rejected and a plan imposed by the federal court. In 1963, the district was ordered to provide transfers for black students to desegregated schools and in 1965 a total Freedom of Choice plan was ordered, giving all parents the right to choose schools for their children.

Even under the Freedom of Choice organization, desegregation of the student population remained token; faculty desegregation was negligible or non-existent. The school board still reviewed each application for

transfer on an individual basis, although approval of requests seems to have become more routine with time. The CNC Education Committee continued its efforts to organize black parents to apply for transfers for their children.

The school system and the Board of Education continued to be "silent" on the matter of desegregation. Although few statements were made that actively challenged the rulings and requirements of the courts, no active steps were publicly taken to promote the process. The black member of the Board of Education was consistently ignored or outvoted on matters pertaining to further change in the dual system. One black individual who held the post during the 1960's reports that the issues of compliance with court rulings and of reorganization were studiously avoided by the board. As this informant puts it: "When it came to desegregation, it was a lost ball in the high weeds...." Both the black school board member and representatives of black interests in their meetings with district officials argued repeatedly that the system must take steps toward change, or the federal courts would step in from outside to impose their own plans. Even this prospect of loss of control, however, was met with passivity.

The district also pursued plans which continued the outlines of the dual structure. For example, plans were made to construct a new school in a traditional black area in conjunction with an urban renewal program to build subsidized housing there. These plans jointly would concentrate a population of black students and channel them to a school which would be predominantly black. Plans continued in spite of black protests against the location of the housing project. Ironically, the school was built in its originally proposed, peripheral position in the city district, even though the housing project was successfully thwarted. Overcrowding in the black schools continued to be a problem which was met by avoidance or by plans for predominantly black facilities.

New Efforts in the Sixties

The late 1950's and the 1960's saw greater political participation and involvement by low income and working class blacks.[5] At the same time, students at the black college and at the black high school became very active in the pursuit of civil rights. This pattern of involvement paralleled the activities which were developing nationally at the time. Civil rights activities such as community organizing efforts, marches, sit-ins, and other mass protests which were occurring in other parts of the South stimulated Bradford blacks and provided a context for their efforts.

The various active elements in the black population generally supported one another in their efforts. Although particular demands and tactics might differ, e.g., between the efforts of CNC members in the courts and the mass protests organized by students and community workers, leadership tended to coalesce as the possibility of success became apparent, or as white resistance became more pronounced. The black community usually saw the goal of its efforts, including the

efforts at desegregation of the public schools, as the development of a better economic position. In the early years of the decade, effort was directed to the desegregation of public facilities, businesses and other institutions. These goals were pursued by the use of sit-ins, demonstrations and economic boycotts as well as the traditional informal channels of communication.

These activities in the early 1960's culminated at the mayor's election in 1963. The CNC-coordinated voting power of the black community was directed to the support of a candidate who took a moderate stance on the issues of desegregation. In particular, this candidate indicated his serious consideration of desegregation in the city. He won the election with black support. At the time of his inauguration, students and other members of the black population gathered at City Hall in a series of mass demonstrations, calling for the fulfillment of campaign pledges and the immediate desegregation of the city's establishments and facilities. Although white leaders attempted to utilize the traditional informal channels of communication to CNC leaders and similar figures in the black community in order to curtail the protests, the demonstrations continued.

The white leadership in the city finally yielded. The mayor formed a special biracial commission to promote desegregation in all sectors of civic life in Bradford. Commission members presented the city's new policies; media and civic groups were mobilized to support the desegregation drive. Most elements of the community cooperated, including small businesses, government and more substantial business concerns. A notable exception was the city school district. Although approached by representatives of the Mayor's Commission, the Board of Education declined to publicly support further desegregation in the schools or to take substantial action to promote the process. The slow pace of efforts toward desegregation by the schools remained the same. This stubbornness was disappointing to those who had worked for many years to affect the school district's dual organization. As one informant recalls: "We had white leaders come on television at that time and tell us - there will be desegregation in our city, but no one ever did that about the schools."

Resistance to Black Action

As early as 1957, the school board seems to have taken the stance that desegregation of the schools, if it were to occur, would be better achieved by litigation rather than by the district's decision.[6] Administrators and the board took little or no public initiative throughout the sixties in pursuing plans to achieve a change in the school's organization. At the same time, the district was also concerned that whatever changes and desegregation did occur would occur peacefully. A peaceful process was desired not only for the sake of continued operation of the schools, but especially for maintenance of the community's positive image. Thus, principals and faculty were informed as early as the late 1950's as to the tolerant stance that was expected of them as desegregation progressed.

School officials also could clearly see the "handwriting on the wall" as they followed the course of various cases, especially those concerning the dejure/de facto desegregation issues and the use of quotas and busing to integrate the schools. The Bradford city school system was constrained by federal policies through its involvement in government programs of financial assistance for educational development, such as the Head Start program. The district appears to have been careful to comply with federal regulations concerning the programs the system elected to adopt and operate. The school system, however, was not above turning down substantial funds from the government when it felt that the changes required in district operation were unreasonable or out of line with the pace of change in the Bradford schools (e.g., in the early 1970's).

Protest and Involvement in the Late Sixties

As the decade progressed, the development of black identity and desire for autonomy which could be seen nationally was also occurring in Bradford. By the latter half of the 1960's, a variety of black interest groups had organized in the city. The CNC, as indicated above, still played an important role in the expression of black concerns. New and younger leaders were active, however, while low income blacks continued their involvement. These participants tended to look toward the strategies of protest for the pursuit of black goals, recognizing and building upon the successes of such approaches earlier in the decade.

A series of protest activities, including boycotts and demonstrations, were directed to government and businesses in the community. Although the focus of activity was on the community as a whole and on the city administration, black concerns included demands for change in the schools. These included a call for immediate and full desegregation of the school system, the placement of blacks in the district administration and the establishment of black oriented programs in the system, such as courses on black history. Some of the demands of the black interests on the city were met. The school district appointed its first blacks to the central office in 1968. This indirect approach to the schools (through confrontation with city government and other sectors) was not entirely successful, however, for the school system still did not implement further desegregation. Neither did it indicate that pursuit of such changes was a policy of the district.

In addition to being a period of black protest activity, the mid and late sixties saw a substantial involvement of various citizens' groups, many seeking peaceful change. Some informants now look back on the period as a time of special cooperation between black and white citizens. Liberal whites joined with middle class and other blacks to pursue the goals of desegregation and equal rights. Generally, such groups were focused on the whole community and its problems with social race relations in economics and government. In school affairs, these groups tended to express their concerns to the school board or to officials on specific matters. They also organized community events and programs to promote public recognition of the issues. By the end

of the decade, however, lack of progress especially on educational issues and the growth of black consciousness had caused many of the black leaders who had formerly operated through these channels to divert their efforts from those groups to the protest movement and the presentation of a unified black front.

DECADE OF CHANGE

After the decisions of the Supreme Court in 1968 condemning de facto segregation and approving the use of busing as an acceptable tool in the process of desegregation, the law suits against the Bradford city school system were reopened. Directed to submit plans for further desegregation, the Board of Education was unable to satisfy the federal courts. A politically active white informant who was closely involved with school affairs at the time pointed out that just prior to the required preparation of a new desegregation plan, three members of the board were replaced by the city council. This informant indicated that these individuals had been replaced because they were too "liberal-minded." Shortly before the commencement of the 1970-71 school year, the court imposed its own attendance plan on the city district. This plan called for major changes in the distribution of black and white students through an expanded program of busing. Desegregation of the faculty also was begun in earnest at this time.

Because these changes were implemented immediately before the school year began, some confusion and disorder in the operation of the system resulted. However, compliance with the attendance plan was generally achieved by the start of classes. Both supporters and opponents of the reorganization followed the actions of the school board and the administration closely. The district administration and board members presented the plans and forthcoming changes through the media and in a series of public meetings. Throughout this process, representatives of the district disassociated themselves from the desegregation process. One administrator is reported to have told a group of citizens: "We're sorry that we're ruining your schools, but it's not our fault. The federal government and the courts are forcing us to ruin your schools." Because of such statements by officials, many informants came to feel that the district was failing to provide the leadership necessary to guide the changes taking place in the schools and was thus unable to continue to provide an educational system that met the needs of the students.

As in many other southern communities undergoing the desegregation process, a number of private schools arose in Bradford immediately after implementation of the court-ordered reorganization. One parent reports that when the 1970 plan was revealed, figures were released indicating that there would be a large influx of blacks into the school her children were attending. On that same day, she received a telephone call advising her that a new private school was to be established to serve the children who were attending that public school (see table 2). In addition, the county schools continued to increase their student population as suburbanization and growth proceeded. After 1970, many people began to refer to this process

as "white flight." In 1969, the city school population was approximately 14,000, with 58% black; the county schools had about the same number of students but only 19% black. By 1976, the city school population was approximately 9,500 with 80% black, while the county schools had 17,000 with 27% black. At the present, the city schools are estimated to be 86% black in a population of 10,000 students. Many informants now categorize the county schools as a "white" system.

TABLE 2

PRIVATE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT FOR CITY AND COUNTY STUDENTS, 1971-76

	City	County
1971-72	485	1,114
1972-73	552	1,189
1973-74	559	1,240
1974-75	757	1,314
1975-76	690	1,286

Both black and white leaders in Bradford were concerned about possible problems and damage to the community's image should the changes in the schools provoke the violent confrontations which had occurred in other southern cities. In addition to informal indications of desires for peaceful transition from such leadership, various groups were organized in the city to assist the community in adjusting to the changes. Groups also formed to promote their own interests in the district reorganization. These groups represented a range of interests and included both low and middle income sectors as well as organizations initiated by civic leadership. School personnel, government agencies, community organizations and organizations such as churches were involved in the process. As a result, public debate about the district reorganization was active and tensions were often great as opposing viewpoints were articulated at public gatherings and at school board meetings. There were no significant incidents of violence or civil disruption, however.

The Charrette

Black families as well as many other individuals and groups in Bradford were very concerned about the desegregation process, problems in the schools, and especially the perceived lack of leadership and direction being offered by district leaders. In addition, various groups in addition to the black community seemed to feel a real lack of input into the school system's operation. During the 1970-71 school year, a coalition of black and white citizens began to organize a program to increase their voice and devise ways to improve the process of desegregation in the schools. Supported by federal funds, this group began to plan for a community meeting to bring together all the various interests in Bradford which were concerned with the changes in the schools. At this meeting, grievances would be aired and proposals developed based on the input of townspeople from all levels, including individuals and groups such as students who normally had little role in policy formation for the district. The program was called a charrette process and had been applied in other cities with some success in dealing with urban problems. Representatives from many segments of the black community were closely involved.

A ten day charrette was held in the summer of 1971. Sessions alternated between large meetings of all those in attendance and workshops which sought to find solutions to specific problems. An atmosphere of confrontation, open discussion and emotional intensity was deliberately cultivated. Turnout for the charrette was good, especially among low and middle income groups, and included representatives from housing projects as well as from groups associated with the KKK. A number of black leaders were active participants. Personnel from the schools, especially some of the black faculty, were also closely involved in the charrette activities. Although some members of the district administration and the school board did attend some of the sessions, few actively participated. As a result of the charrette, a set of proposals was presented to the school district. Participants in the charrette indicated their hope that new channels of communication with the system could be maintained.

The attitude of school officials to the charrette was generally unfavorable. One administrator indicated that the proposals presented were unrealistic or "naive," and that such "lay" input was usually unhelpful. A former school board member characterizes the charrette as "...one good way to rip off federal funds, it was a real waste of money." The district took no explicit action on the recommendations, although some of the proposals appear to have been implemented at a later date, without acknowledgement to the charrette participants. This inaction and the attitude of officials contributed to the growing sense of disappointment and disillusionment with the schools, especially among lower income groups. A followup meeting to the original charrette was subsequently attempted in the community, but the response was less and the process was gradually abandoned.

Merger Efforts

In 1971, voters in Bradford County were presented with an issue to merge the city and the county school systems. Such a move had been proposed several times previously in the preceding years, such as in the late 1950's. These merger attempts had been unpopular or voted down in the past. Traditionally, groups in the city, including black leadership, had rejected the plan while county residents tended to support the opportunity to join the prosperous and more prestigious city system. The rationale for the vote at this time involved various factors such as the small size of the county and consequent inefficiencies due to the duplication of facilities and other resources. The vote on the issue delivered a resounding defeat to the merger proposal and reversed the traditional pattern of support on the issue. County residents tended to oppose the measure, while CNC leadership also opposed it, perhaps fearing that its gains in the city school district would be lost if black voters were incorporated into a larger district.

Black Representation

As noted above, protest and political pressure in the late 1960's had resulted in the appointment of some blacks to positions in the district administration. Shortly before the court ordered desegregation of 1970, a black was appointed as an assistant superintendent. By this time, black interests had succeeded in gaining a second seat on the Board of Education. Despite these gains, however, black members of the board continued to be unable to promote the board's acceptance of change and its initiative in guiding that change. Thus, when the courts monitored the progress of the district's reorganization, they found it necessary to order further desegregation in the mid-1970's.

In the spring of 1975, the court again ordered further desegregation to bring the social race balance of students and faculty in each school into line with the black-white ratio of the district as a whole. Early in 1975, the city council had requested the state legislature to pass a bill allowing the school board to be elected directly. This legislation passed in June. The request was seen as a response to pressure from black interests. It must also have been an attractive move to the council members in that it removed the city from any formal responsibility for further changes and events in the district. Later that summer, the board closed four schools, some of which had been recently built in black neighborhoods. Although these neighborhoods protested, the board persisted in its plan and explained the move as economically necessary.

Due to the presence of a black representative in the delegation to the General Assembly, CNC leadership had some input into the organization of the new board. In matters of local legislation, the General Assembly held to a convention that the local delegation must unanimously support the bill. Otherwise, action was deferred. This convention and the fact that the request for legislation was entered later in the Assembly session than was normally done placed the black representative from Bradford in a good position to affect the establishment of the new board. A five member board was specified, to be elected

every four years (at the primary election in October) by voters in the city school district. This structure opened the board to the direct influence of the voting organization of the black community, particularly since the city-out, suburban areas were excluded from voting. The first election was held in 1975. Nearly all the candidates had served on the board previously or had been involved as citizens in school affairs. A number of blacks sought the positions. After a close election for some candidates, four black and one white members were chosen

Just before the provisions for an elected board, the school system chose a replacement for the district superintendent who had held that post since the late 1950's and was now retiring. The new superintendent thus began his tenure with a board substantially different from that which had hired him. Conflicts soon arose between the superintendent and the new board. Complaints by the board included criticisms that the superintendent could not or would not develop a long term plan for the system, that he initiated significant programs involving policy decisions without consulting the board, that he was unable to work well with some members of his administration (including some high level black administrators) and that he provided little dynamic leadership for the district. The superintendent, conversely, felt that the school board was too involved in administrative decisions, did not provide sufficient guidance for the system and was inconsistent and indecisive. After several years of this conflict, the board refused to renew the superintendent's contract. Although many people in the community had also expressed concern about the administrator's performance, the newspapers and several groups in the white community protested when he was dismissed. The white member of the board resigned shortly after this action, although his declared reason for leaving was to run for office in the city government. Before he left, he joined the other members of the board in the unanimous selection of a black administrator from outside the state for the superintendent's position.

Attitudes Toward the District

Since the election of the black dominated board of education in 1975, white civic leaders and groups have generally become less involved in the city schools. For example, the Chamber of Commerce and similar organizations are reported to be much less active in school affairs than they once were. Many white individuals who had previously participated in district activities and issues gradually ceased this involvement. Some white parents seem to perceive a lessened degree of control over their schools, partly because of the reorganizations which to a great extent did away with neighborhood schools, but also seen in relations with the school system at the district level. This feeling of exclusion is not shared by all parents in the district and may be to a degree part of a "critical" attitude adopted in the community toward the system.

Although the declining number of white students and the loss of neighborhood schools contribute to the alienated feelings of many whites in Bradford toward the schools, other factors also operate.

The attitude of criticism and frustration held by blacks toward the district during the long process of desegregation has been somewhat reversed, with the white community leadership now criticizing the system. Charges of incompetency, inefficiency and lack of dynamic leadership are voiced or implied about the board of education and the administration. When the superintendent was dismissed in 1979, reverse racism was strongly implied by the newspapers.

In addition, the white member of the board was very critical of the district's operation and direction. He consistently criticized his fellow board members as ineffective and inconsistent as decision makers and voted in the minority (usually of one) on many issues such as the dismissal of the superintendent, altered policies in areas such as grading and attendance and on similar points. In 1979, this individual resigned from the board and ran for mayor, to a large extent based on his performance as a member of the Board of Education. He and candidates with similar stands (representing a community-development oriented and somewhat conservative platform) defeated a slate of black and white moderate incumbents and challengers for city council seats, establishing a majority on that body. In those same elections, the school board retained its black majority composition. Two white candidates who appear to hold positions of cooperation and moderation were elected along with three incumbent blacks.

New Directions

Informants view with concern the increasing "inner city" character of the Bradford city schools. The city-out sections prohibit the system from expanding its clientele or support as the city grows. The student population is slowly declining and is increasingly from low income families. The provision of services and programs for these children has been a central interest of the district. A number of factors have hampered the district in improving its situation and image. Many of these factors contribute to the disaffection of the community from the city schools. These include disciplinary problems in the schools, with attendant concerns about safety, the historical imposition of court ordered change and the resulting series of quickly implemented reorganizations of the district, and concerns about a decline in the quality of education, with the growth of remedial and vocational programs in the district and changes in the system of evaluating students (see Clement et al 1978).

One of the ways the board has attempted to deal with these constraints, to improve relations with the community and to pursue educational goals has been to call for more long term planning. The failure of the previous superintendent to work well with the board in developing direction for the system was a point of significant conflict. At the same time, the board has been encouraging more input from the community by forming various advisory and task-oriented citizens' groups. Many concerned members of the black community continue to express their interests in educational issues to the Committee for the Black Community (which was formerly known as the CNC; the name was changed in the late 1960's) or

associated representatives. These spokespeople continue to relay concerns directly to administrators or the superintendent, or to the school board. Now, however, school board members are more accessible to these black leaders through informal contacts which were not previously possible. More blacks are also now present as administrators in the central office. Communication and input on educational matters at the distinct level, however, is somewhat distince from citizens' inputs at the level of the local schools, in terms of participants and in the kinds of issues treated (see Clement et al 1978; this pattern of relations between schools and community seems to have existed throughout the period examined in this report, although the divisions have never been completely rigid, and some informants feel that the local schools have been less controlled and connected with the central administration during the tenure of the superintendent who was recently released).

PART II: The Structure of Conflict in the District

The development of black input to the Bradford school district has been an extended process, involving a significant degree of conflict and commitment of resources. Why was this conflict extended over three decades? What patterns can be seen in the process described in the previous section and why did they occur? What were the results of the process for the expression of black interests and for the school district?

The schools in Bradford can be seen as having replicated and expressed the traditional social order of the community. The school system was thus symbolically as well as functionally important in the community, both because it formed a model of the accepted distribution of rights and power between blacks and whites, and because the organization of the district contained and expressed basic premises of the social organization which defined that distribution. The district's significance at two levels made it a likely arena for conflict between traditional interests and a black community attempting to reorder social relations in the city. The pursuit of goals by the black community and the stance of resistance offered by the traditional leadership in the school district led to the employment of various resources and 'strategies' (see note 2). The resulting course of events in turn led, we suggest, to constraints on gains by black interests and to strain in the relationship between the school system and the Bradford community.

The Importance of the District

As a major process of enculturation for many American children, public schooling is naturally a focus of attention for those concerned with the transmission of traditional knowledge and patterns of social organization. Such interest is exhibited not only by parents, but also by holders of authority and power in the community (see, for example, the studies of community power cited earlier). Gearing and his associates (Gearing 1976a, b,, n.d.; see also Ogbu 1978) have made the point that the organization of schooling and the distribution of knowledge in a society tend to reflect the traditional distribution of power and the patterns of status differentiation. In Bradford, the dual structure of the schools represented the pattern of social race differentiation and the plural relations of the community.

Traditionally, the black population in Bradford was distinguished as a group on the basis of social race markers. At the same time, the dominant whites controlled many critical aspects of the lives of the black group. The social order defined black and white interests as separate or opposed, and blacks were segregated from the community as a whole. The black 'group', consequently, was unable to fully operate as an autonomous social unit, but was not fully incorporated into the community (see Smith 1974 for discussion of this facet of the plural society). Some development of autonomy was possible in the black population, however. The segregation itself, in residence and public

activity, stimulated some growth of "sub-community" organization. The development of separate customs in the context of social barriers between blacks and whites and the pattern of rule through black "leaders" traditionally adopted by white interests also promoted such growth.

These plural conditions of partial autonomy for the blacks with penetrations by white authority were explicitly reproduced and institutionalized in the city schools. Communication and input from both black personnel in the schools and the black population of the city was restricted to a few organizational positions, primarily the superintendent's office. These positions were occupied by whites and had final absolute control over the operation of black facilities. At the level of the local school, however, black faculty and their client neighborhoods had a degree of control within the constraints imposed from the central office. The district often seemed to neglect the situation in the black system unless some severe problem arose.

Symbolic Dimensions

A central part of the structure of relations which developed in the plural conditions of Bradford was a cultural frame which defined and interpreted social organization in terms of the characteristics and opposition of blacks and whites. Some premises of this interpretive frame asserted the fundamental inferiority of blacks to whites. It defined their general incompetence and inability and identified the black population as a potential threat to whites economically, politically, physically or genetically. On the basis of such cultural premises, black claims for services, representation and autonomy, or attempts at social change and reorganization of the frame of social race relations, can be dismissed by whites as illegitimate. That is, the cultural frame for social relations in Bradford denied or restricted legitimacy to blacks and their actions as individuals or as a group. This frame was critical for maintenance of the pattern of dominance and subordination in the plural context. The denial of legitimacy to black organization and goals, and to black interests in relationships with whites or within the community, hindered their attainment of either full autonomy or incorporation into the larger society.

At the same time, the labelling of blacks and their actions as illegitimate tended to reserve legitimacy and authority for the dominant white interests in the community. Legitimacy is the basis for authority; authority implies rights sanctioned and legitimated by the society or community. This concept of authority should be distinguished from that of "power," which refers to the ability to influence or affect the decisions, events and processes governing community life (see Smith 1974 for a development of this distinction from its Weberian basis). Positions with little authority may have a good deal of power, while some positions of great authority have little real influence. The recognition of rights and authority belonging to a group or its representatives acknowledges a legitimate basis for that authority. In Bradford, traditional interests attempted

to withhold such recognition when blacks achieved offices with authority. The first black member of the city council was excluded from contacts with the other, white members. Traditional rights of that office such as attendance at luncheon meetings for discussion of council affairs were denied (on the grounds that the restaurants were still segregated). As the Committee for the Black Community became stronger, it was criticized by whites as not representing the true interests of the black population and thus as being an illegitimate political body.

The city school system expressed the symbolic dimensions of the social order in Bradford as well as reproducing the political conditions. The districts' role as symbolic of the pattern of dominance and subordination was enhanced by the fact that the social positions within it were formally defined by the school system as an organization. That is, the roles and relations between members of the organization (i.e., black and white children and adult personnel) were not only explicitly specified, they were also legitimated by the authority of the formal organization. The norms which operated in Bradford to govern social race relations informally and through general cultural principles were thus formal, explicit and specific in the operation of the city schools. Particularly, the limited rights and authority blacks could obtain in the school system were clearly delineated. By defining education in terms of black and white, the organization of the district claimed and justified the traditional frame for and pattern of community relations.

The Setting for Conflict

Because of the symbolic as well as the pragmatic value of schooling, then, the Bradford school district was a likely arena for conflict. Correspondingly, the conflict over changes in district relations had two significant aspects. At one level, considerations of resource control and educational opportunity for blacks were at issue. Black influence in the district could be a bargaining point in political negotiations with dominant interests in the community as was the black vote in city elections. Such political considerations may not have been articulated by black leaders, yet they were certainly aware that the district constituted an important resource in terms of materials and programs for the city's children.

At another level, the pursuit of more input into the system by blacks was a challenge to the cultural frame which defined the traditional order of social relations. Significantly, influence in the school district means influence on or through formally defined offices and positions with explicit rights because of the structure of authority defined by the organization. If blacks were to obtain such input and authority in positions within the school district, their interests and rights would be acknowledged as legitimate, thus compromising a critical foundation of the traditional social organization. For blacks, the potential for challenging basic premises of the pattern of relations at the symbolic level made the district an important site at which to attempt greater input.

Desegregation was an important process as well as an objective in the black community's pursuit of pragmatic and symbolic gains in the district. Demands for a unitary system were legitimate in the eyes of the courts and the federal government, thus offering the potential support of those higher authorities for local action by blacks (see below for further discussion of this point). An alternative frame to that traditionally imposed in Bradford could thus be proposed, citing the legitimacy of national authority. In addition, desegregation in the system could lead to placement of blacks in positions of authority in schools or in the district administration. Input into the allocation of resources could thus be achieved, while the symbolic challenge to the traditional frame of social race relations would be maintained.

The traditional interests were well aware of the significance of black demands after 1954. Compare, for example, the system's ready compliance with the court rulings in 1950 to their extended resistance to subsequent attempts at reorganization. In the former case, no symbolic challenge was offered to the traditional structure. When the plan to reopen a closed school to deal with overcrowded black schools in the late fifties was framed as a desegregation issue, the school board dropped the project in order to avoid a confrontation in the symbolic terms inherent in such a frame.

Several characteristics of the school district were important resources for the black community in the pursuit of their goals of greater input and symbolic challenge, and for traditional interests' resistance to change. As mentioned, power in the district was closely associated with positions of authority. Thus, any achievement of formal office in the system's central administration gave blacks some improved basis for future influence, as well as some control of educational resources. At the same time, the political control of the limited routes of access into the district structure by traditional interests made it very difficult for groups such as the black community to attain positions in the system. That is, entry into the structure of authority in the system was restricted to appointment to the Board of Education and that board's appointments. This route was dominated by the influence of system officials and of the dominant political groups in city government. Influence applied at the level of the local schools tended to be distinct from that operating at the central office, and of limited effect in the district as a whole.

The character of the school system as a formal and public organization which contributed to its symbolic importance in expressing the social order also made it particularly vulnerable to constraints from outside the community. The district's position in a hierarchy of authority extending to the federal government allowed black interests recourse to the courts as well as to appeals for compliance with the "law of the land" (see below). Since the district operated formally through officials and positions with stated authorities, it was exposed to review and direction from the judiciary; the structure of authority gave the school system the explicit power to change district organization. Administratively, the district was fairly autonomous at the local level. It

had narrow but limited dependence on the city administration through the council's appointments to the board. In other matters, the city was little involved formally. County Commissioners provided funds to improve the quality of the city schools, as a supplement to state and federal money, by approving the district's budget. The system's relationship with them, therefore, was political, and to a great extent controlled by the commissioners. In addition, the positions taken on educational issues at the state level left a good deal of discretion and control to the local district, and were also supportive of the maintenance of traditional arrangements in the district. Because of this organizational position, the district was distinct from and to some extent peripheral to the political situation in the larger community. Appointees to the board of education provided an indirect route of expression for dominant group interests while to some extent protecting council members and other representatives of those interests. The school system was insulated from direct voting pressure. Dominant interests, therefore, could to an extent afford to protect the symbolic stance of the district at the expense of the district and schools. This was possible because the symbolic value of the system to whites seemed to outweigh other considerations, and because gains by blacks in the district could be restricted to the educational sector of community life (see below). Thus, for example, in 1963, general desegregation efforts were cooperatively pursued throughout Bradford in the face of actual and potential disruptions of the economy and civic life by mass protests. The school system's position, however, was allowed to remain unchanged.

A final factor which was utilized by both black and traditional interests in the conflict within the district was the nature of discourse about the schools. Educational issues lend themselves to discussion in terms of values and ideals. The symbolic dimensions of positions achieved by blacks in school affairs would be clear because of this familiarity in educational debate with conflict over principles and ideas, such as in the rhetorical appeals for "quality education" or "what's right for the children." Framing concerns in this way provided justification for suggested change as in calling for compliance with the law, but maintenance of the debate at such a high level of discourse also worked conservatively, sometimes giving those holding power the ability to avoid concrete action. Note, for example, the school board's rejection of transfers and reorganization in the 1950's on the grounds of preserving the best conditions for children's "psychology"; see also the equation of change in 1970 with ruination of the schools.

STRATEGIES

The strategies employed by black and traditional interests reflected the nature of their respective goals, the resources available to them, including "opportunities" such as Supreme Court decisions, and the constraining effects of countermoves by opposing interests. In its pursuit of pragmatic and symbolic goals, the black community could utilize political influence based on its voting organization, appeals to authority in the form of principles of

legality, equality and educational ideals, as well as the authority of the courts, and at times the power of the black population in protest activities and disruptions of the community routine. The pursuit of offices and of explicit authority, for example in local part organization, seems to have been common to blacks' efforts to improve their position in the city generally. This approach was especially true for the CNC. The potential symbolic rewards of accomplishing such goals in one factor in explaining this strategy. The lack of informal channels which could be used probably combined with the base of power in the vote to direct black efforts to the attainment of those offices and quasi-formal positions which voting could obtain or influence. During the attempts to develop influence in the district, black efforts focused on obtaining resources or placing individuals in positions to which they had "rights" as defined by higher authorities, such as the courts, but which were denied them by the local system. Such targets included equal facilities, the placement of black students into traditionally white schools, and the acquisition of offices with authority.

The Vote as Resource

Political organization to mobilize and coordinate the vote of the black population formed the basis for many improvements in the general position of blacks in the city. By providing black leaders with a bargaining point (e.g., potential voting support for a candidate or on an issue), voter organization increased their informal influence with leaders and authorities in the larger community, as well as sometimes capturing offices. Voting power has been a critical factor in determining the position of the blacks in Bradford, but it has its limitations and its constraints (see Keech 1968 for a discussion of the impact of the black vote in two southern communities). In order to successfully exploit its voting resources, black leadership has had to accept many compromises on candidates and issues, to seek to build coalitions of support with other groups, and to adopt moderate stands supporting steady progress, rather than radical change, toward improvement for the black community. Even so, black representation on the city council was limited to members from one or two predominantly black wards until the late 1970's. Black appointed to the Board of Education had to make it clear that they took all the children of Bradford as their responsibility, indicating that they were not primarily representing black interests.

The voting power of the black community could only indirectly be brought to bear on the school district until the establishment of elected board. Through influence and pressure on elected officials black leaders attempted to gain representation in the district, with some success, through the city council appointments to the school board. Such pressure, however, never succeeded in establishing a black voice in a position of decisive authority: black representatives did not constitute a majority vote on the Board of Education whose white members tended to preserve a unified position, nor were blacks on the school board in numbers proportionate to their presence

in the student population until after 1975. That the dominant interests in the district were able to accommodate the political pressures of the CNC while continuing to block the input of black interests can be seen in the silent response of the school board to a specially formed black delegation. At the same meeting, the first black member of the board was seated.

The move to an elected board was partially the result of the influence blacks could exert on the city council from their voting strength, but can also be traced to factors such as the results of long years of litigation over the schools, recent and impending court ordered changes for the district, the growth of the black student population in the system and the increasingly poor image of the district in the community (see below). These factors made withdrawal of control and disengagement from the city district at this particular time acceptable to traditional interests. Nonetheless, the reorganization of the selection process for board members was an important gain for black interests, because it opened up the district to the application of one of the black community's major resources, that is, the voting organization. The results of the board election in 1979 indicate the effectiveness of the change.

The Appeal to Authority

In the school district, the vote was not directly effective as a resource until recently (with the advent of the elected board). The character of the school system as a formal organization indicated the importance of obtaining positions of authority, but voting as an important route to such offices was blocked by the insulation of the district. At the same time, informal power to influence the board and other officials was essentially monopolized by the dominant and traditional white interests. It was thus necessary for other approaches to be utilized or developed in order to affect the school situation either symbolically or pragmatically.

The Supreme Court's decisions provided the authority for black pursuit of change. In addition to the possibilities for litigation, the federal position after 1955 allowed black leaders to point to national policy and the rulings of the courts to justify their demands and to appeal to principle for a radical change. The early petitions submitted to the district calling for a unitary system were thus framed in terms of peaceful compliance with and support of the law and the government. It was, however, threats of legal action and the results of litigation which were the direct causes of district reorganization. For example, the threat of legal action was significant even in the first token desegregation. Under the original rulings, original plaintiffs in the suit against the board would have been able to return to court if their current applications had been denied, because they would have exhausted their opportunities for administrative remedy. Later, direct court orders were imposed to produce changes in the schools. After the courts had ordered some changes in the Bradford schools, black representatives on the Board of Education repeatedly urged the

board to take action to avoid further directives, warning that if initiative was not taken, the courts would again step in. Particularly in the 1950's, informal contacts with white leaders were used to argue for cooperative efforts to bring about non-disruptive changes in the system. These examples of a search for alternative approaches to litigation and of concern about the failure of local authority suggests that black political leadership was somewhat reluctant to move directly to the courts to pursue their goals. Such reservation may indicate a recognition of the potential costs, in terms of community support, involved in utilizing authority from outside the community.

That caution eventually proved to reflect a real problem. All participants in school affairs in Bradford have tended to view intervention and control from outside the district, such as from the state or federal governments, in a negative light, as infringing upon the community's autonomy and values. (Such attitudes toward outsiders and the tendency of communities to use outsiders as scapegoats has been remarked upon in the anthropological literature; see Frankenberg 1957 for an example.) The results of much of the school district's resistance to blacks' attempts at change was to accentuate this cultural perspective toward outsiders, to link black interests with the actions of the courts and finally to ease white abandonment and discredit of the city schools. That is, focus on the imposition of court orders and imposed change was used to portray the schools as less worthy or important than previously. For example, the continued reluctance of the district to initiate change and to respond to the demands for reorganization plans essentially gave the courts ultimate responsibility for the future of the system and almost assured that the schools would have to be operated under injunction. If the report is correct that district leaders had decided in the 1950's that reorganization would best be accomplished through litigation, then it is difficult to assert that the Board of Education did not really believe the judiciary would step in. In addition, after the actions taken by the courts in the early 1960's, it would have been difficult for district officials to hold to such beliefs. In fact, former officials report that eventual desegretation and reorganization was anticipated from the start of the sixties.

Mass Protest

Demonstration and other protest activities appear to have been a critical factor in desegregation and other changes in social race relations in the Bradford community, especially with regard to city services and issues having to do with housing. Its effects on school affairs was less direct, although protest activities increased and became more focused in the late sixties. The district was able to retain a degree of insulation from such activity, minimizing changes in response to these demands. Nonetheless, several significant achievements for blacks in the school system were brought about by protest action, including the first hiring of black administrators in the central office. Civil disruption and mass protest was potentially very significant for the black population, especially as an approach to changes in the symbolic aspects of education affairs.

Such tactics move completely outside the established frame, ignoring questions of sanctioned authority and legitimacy to present demands directly and on the basis of the power of mass action. Protest and civil disobedience is thus in itself a rejection of the traditional frame, and its power has no dependence on or derivation from the social positions and rights assigned within that frame. At the same time, use of the mass protest approach can be clearly labelled as illegitimate by those whose maintain the traditional cultural frame. This is so because the power of demonstrations is not sanctioned and can have no authority within that frame (or even be incorporated within it). No authority can be invoked to control protests, only the application of force. Conversely, the protest activities could not directly challenge the symbolic order in the district, because they could not be classified as legitimate, nor could protest leaders be assigned authority and still utilize the power of mass demonstrations. Protest power, however, was instrumental in gaining positions of authority for blacks, which could challenge the frame by claiming rights within the social order. The use of protest activities to gain such positions also contributed to the attempts by traditional interests to question the bases for the legitimacy of blacks' achievements in the district.

Counters to Black Efforts

Using the various resources and factors indicated above, the traditional interests who controlled the school district resisted change and greater input from blacks until pressures and circumstances made it acceptable to relinquish control. When this control was relinquished to black interests, the move had an "all or nothing" character. Essentially, the actions of the traditional leadership resulted in a process of disengagement from the school system and from responsibility for its character or direction, eventually leading to an almost total abandonment of the district by those interests. In the process of that abandonment the credibility and image of the district became increasingly negative, and the system alienated many concerned citizens in Bradford. In terms of the traditional cultural frame, a result of this process and the "damage" incurred was to question the ability or character of the district as a functioning educational institution which could provide "quality" schooling. Thus, as blacks were gaining authority within the district, the legitimacy of the system itself was being challenged by the retreating leadership. This result operated to maintain the traditional symbolic position of blacks, since they continued to be unable to attain acknowledged authority.

The interests who traditionally controlled the district were able to utilize their organizational position, the issue of "outside intervention", and the control of access to the school system offices to stall black community attempts to increase its input and to disengage from the school system. Since, as a result of the district's policies toward reorganization, the courts were responsible for the specific plans which introduced change into the system, district officials were able to plead that they were uninvolved, that "they are ruining your schools." In addition to the negative image of the schools being promoted by such statements, the traditionally dominant interests were distancing themselves from

control and relinquishing leadership (although not their offices) in the district organization. By the 1970 desegregation, a good deal of control of the future of the Bradford schools had essentially been turned over to the federal courts despite the intense interest in school affairs exhibited by a variety of both black and white civic organizations. The unsuccessful attempt to vote a merger of the city and the county schools in the early 1970's might be construed as a late move to bring the city system into a larger district in which the white student population and white political interests could overwhelm the black community of the inner city. Certainly, black voters perceived the move as detrimental and were instrumental in the defeat of the measure.

By 1975 the time was ripe for the balance of power in the district to shift significantly. Informants report the lassitude of staff in the central office in the immediately preceding years. Further court ordered changes were imminent. Meanwhile, city population had shifted outward: the city schools exhibited an increasingly higher percentage of black students. In contrast to its past reputation, the county school system now was being seen as the "quality" district and was undertaking an expanded building program with the financial support of the county's general fund, authorized by the county commissioners. Private schools and segregation academies as well had drawn a portion of children from white families out of the city system. It was in this context that the city council released its control over appointments to the Board of Education. It was also in this context that the 'lame duck' board closed schools in some predominantly black neighborhoods and hired a new superintendent.

In abandoning the city school system, the traditionally dominant interests in the district also weakened the position (both symbolically and practically) of the schools in the community. This "discredit" of the district was to a great extent the result of the association of the "new" authorities, i.e., the growing influence of blacks, with the imposition of "unreasonable" plans for busing and other changes by the courts, the failure of district leadership to respond to the concerns of the district population, and the classification of the changed system as "ruined," inadequate and inoperable. Community support was increasingly withdrawn from the district in the 1970's as these factors operated. The long history of stalling and resistance to reorganization, the resulting uncertainties confronting families in the district, the district's acceptance of "outside forces" which "ruined" the system, the rhetoric of black/white opposition and the increasingly negative presentation of the school system's image by officials and by others in the district such as the newspapers, a leadership that refused to act to regain control of the altered district and to direct the system toward the future, and the continued restrictions on community access to the district organization all contributed to the alienation of the community from the schools. That alienation was expressed by decreased involvement and a "critical attitude" on the part of Bradford citizens.

Some of these factors showing abandonment and the failure of the district's leadership can be seen in the system's response to the charrette. The charrette was supported by a broad range of concerned groups in Bradford, especially those traditionally excluded or marginal to decision making, economic or political power in the city. The same restrictions of access to the system and dismissal of concerns which the district historically directed toward black interests was applied to the charrette. At the same time, the district's distance and passivity toward the event was in line with the trends of previous years, now highlighted by the context of change and the high emotions and deep concerns expressed by citizens in the community and at the charrette. The commitment to the charrette movement was quite strong among many who participated in it, as seen in the meetings subsequently attempted. However, many individuals who had been active in school affairs were seriously disheartened and frustrated by the district's response and withdrew from further support or input to the system.

The charrette showed the intense interest of the community in school affairs and the district's maintenance of passivity in the face of that interest. Although many of the concrete proposals of the workshops may not have been feasible at the time, the input from this mass movement offerred the school system an opportunity to regain control of the schools with the support of the general community. That district leadership declined this potential suggests their commitment to a policy of abandonment, and to the goal of maintaining the traditional symbolic frame so long expressed by the organization of the schools. The response to the charrette and the general failure to act were parts of the symbolic conflict being conducted. Although the achievement of input and authority by the black community could not be indefinitely blocked, the legitimacy and competency of the entire organization could be attacked. This challenge maintained the ability to question the legitimacy of the blacks in the school system, by delaying the sanction and support of the community for the whole organization. Thus, there were continued attempts to impose the traditional black/white frames, e.g., seeing the actions of the board and the system as expressions solely of the interests of the CBC leadership, who are assumed to operate behind the scenes, or criticisms that the board overstepped its rights and operated improperly by interfering with administrative duties.

CONCLUDING REMARKS: Outcomes and Potentials

The symbolic value of the school district in Bradford and the character of the organization indicates why change of the black community's position in the schools encountered such resistance and led to the results discussed above. Desegregation and other gains by blacks seem to have progressed more rapidly in the general community, although many problems still confront black interests in the city. The schools, however, remained for years a "conservative" bulwark, resisting any restructure of the traditional social order. It was at the symbolic level that the traditionally dominant interests that controlled the school district most effectively defended their position, and it was that level which was particularly salient in the development of black input. The processes of disengagement, alienation and criticism in the district tended to continue the operation of the traditional frame distinguishing blacks and whites. The reference points for application of the frame shifted somewhat to encompass the whole district, with the city system becoming the black district and contrasted with the county schools. In a sense, the character of the schools has continued to be identified as either "black" or "white" with corresponding expressions of the premises of the dual system. The legitimacy of black accomplishments and achieved authority as well as their abilities and competency was questioned by its identification with "outside" intervention.

Thus, the pursuit of greater voice in school affairs by the black community resulted in practical and organizational gains, but black leadership encountered difficulty in maintaining the challenge to the traditional frame and to the arrangement of the educational sector of the community arena as symbolic of the structure of plural relations and discrimination. The long process of conflict and the resistance and abandonment in the district by traditional interests left the school system with a damaged image and strained relations with a critical community. The problems of symbolic conflict have affected the operation of the schools. Local schools have developed in past years a great deal of autonomy, the relations between parents and the school have become attenuated, and the controls over children's behavior and performance weakened (see Clement et al 1978 for further discussion of these effects at the local school level). The critical attitude of the community has placed a good deal of pressure on system officials and the board. Mistakes and misunderstandings have provoked substantial reactions. Conflicts within the central office during the transition from the traditional district to the reorganized system hampered administrators and policy-makers during the past decade.

The task which faced the reorganized district after 1975 was to re-establish the legitimacy and credit of the schools within the community. These issues are still in process. Key developments in this re-establishment will probably center around the creation of an image of revitalized and dynamic leadership and presentation of the district as unified in organization and purpose. Criticisms and accusations of the schools as dominated by the narrow interests of black

leadership may have to be replaced by a perception of an education oriented organization, focused on the provision of "quality education" to its student clientele. There are some indications of progress in the accomplishment of these tasks, such as the city's positive response to the new superintendent and the district's programs to create sites of input intermediate to the central office and the local schools (Clement et al 1978:88-92).

Possibly most important in terms of legitimacy, and perhaps necessary for the accomplishment of change in the basic pattern of social relations, would be the re-association of the school system with the community as a whole. Although conflict and criticism may eventually decrease, the legitimacy of black community goals and actions in education will be denied so long as the city schools are perceived as distinct from the rest of Bradford and categorized separately, e.g., as a "black" or as an "inner-city district." That is, the segregated social order and plural discrimination will continue to be symbolized by the organization of the schools, with black autonomy within their own district rather than within their neighborhood schools.

Regardless of the outcomes of the symbolic negotiations, representatives of black interests have achieved control over most of the educational resources available in the district. Their substantive gains have been enormous, considering the situation in 1950. This achievement is significant for an alternative path which the black community might pursue in the plural context of American society. That is, the development of greater autonomy by the black community may eventually lead to escape from a position of plural subordination to corporate or interest group status in the society. Judging from the course of events in Bradford over the last three decades, however, the achievement of such status or of full incorporation will be a long process involving substantial effort and persistence.

NOTES

1. This paper is based upon research conducted from February 1979 through January 1980, supported by grant number NIE-G-79-0043 from the National Institute of Education. Some of the data examined in the research reported here was collected from 1975 through 1977 in work supported by NIE grant 400-76-0008. Ethnographic techniques were employed in all research to obtain information about current and recent historical events and the experiences and perspectives of participants. In addition to interviews, observations and similar techniques, documentary data and secondary sources were utilized. Psuedonyms are used throughout the paper to preserve some degree of anonymity. Also, details of individuals' or groups' actions are sometimes modified or obscured in order to achieve that purpose. Citations of secondary sources that would clearly identify the community have been omitted.

2. The term 'strategies' is used to describe the establishment of objectives and utilization of resource to reach those objectives which may be seen, in hindsight, to have occurred among the various participants in the events. We do not mean to imply that the various actors always proceeded on the basis of long range plans, comprehensive decision-making, or conscious pursuit of "optimal" programs for action, although some may have done so on particular issues or points. Rather, we wish to focus on those trends of action and negotiation in social relations which can be distinguished when events are viewed from a historical perspective.

3. The incident reported here was described by a secondary source. This "silence is silence" response was used on other occasions, e.g., by the mayor and the city council, according to one informant. Such a response is consistent with the pattern of white control of communication with representatives of black interest.

4. Such support from the black community has been important especially when the city has attempted to obtain state or federal programs for development or funds. These projects often require firm and unified expressions of interest from the local community.

5. The groups had been active in the past as well, but much of that early activity had been in the form of infrequent civil unrest or riots. CNC leadership has its origins in business and middle-class groups but has always articulated its desire to represent all segments of the black population. Leaders admit that inclusion of low income and working class blacks has been problematic over the years. In the 1950's, representation in the CNC from labor and union groups appeared to be greater than what was subsequently seen.

6. One source claims that this position was explicitly communicated by a school board member. Other informants concur that boards through the 1960's and early 70's were "dragging their feet" or "didn't care" about the possibility of court orders.

7. Some blacks also criticize the school system, reporting similar feelings of exclusion. Such exclusion is sometimes seen as reflecting class differences or political persuasion. Some blacks have criticized the district apparently from the belief that the system is still dominated by whites through the superintendent (the individual who was recently replaced).

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